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Journal of Number Theory 111 (2005) 154–178

**JOURNAL OF
Number
Theory**

www.elsevier.com/locate/jnt

Vanishing of some cohomology groups and bounds for the Shafarevich–Tate groups of elliptic curves

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Received 8 August 2003; revised 27 May 2004

Communicated by D. Goss

Available online 29 January 2005

Abstract

Let E be an elliptic curve over \mathbf{Q} and ℓ be an odd prime. Also, let K be a number field and assume that E has a semi-stable reduction at ℓ . Under certain assumptions, we prove the vanishing of the Galois cohomology group $H^1(\text{Gal}(K(E[\ell^i])/K), E[\ell^i])$ for all $i \geq 1$. When K is an imaginary quadratic field with the usual Heegner assumption, this vanishing theorem enables us to extend a result of Kolyvagin, which finds a bound for the order of the ℓ -primary part of Shafarevich–Tate groups of E over K . This bound is consistent with the prediction of Birch and Swinnerton–Dyer conjecture.

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Keywords: Galois cohomology; Elliptic curves; Birch and Swinnerton–Dyer conjecture; Shafarevich–Tate groups

1. Introduction

Let E be a (modular) elliptic curve over \mathbf{Q} whose conductor is N . And let K be a finite extension of \mathbf{Q} . Fix an odd prime ℓ . For each natural number $i \geq 1$, $E[\ell^i]$ will denote the group of ℓ^i -torsion points of E . We let L_i be the smallest Galois extension of K over which $E[\ell^i]$ is defined, and $\mathcal{G}_i = \text{Gal}(L_i/K)$ be its Galois group over K .

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In particular, we set $L := L_1 = K(E[\ell])$ and $\mathcal{G} := \mathcal{G}_1 = \text{Gal}(L/K)$. Also, for a finite abelian group A , we will write $|A|$ for its order. And, “ $\text{ord}_\ell n$ ” will denote the maximal integer m such that ℓ^m divides the natural number n . Throughout this article, we will assume that ℓ satisfies the following.

- Assumption 1.** (a) There is a prime v of K over ℓ which is unramified in K/\mathbf{Q} , and E has either good reduction or multiplicative reduction over the completion K_v of K at v .
 (b) $E(K)$ has no ℓ -torsion points.

Under this assumption, we prove

Theorem 2 (Main Theorem). $H^1(\mathcal{G}_i, E[\ell^i]) = 0$ for all $i \geq 1$ unless $\ell = 3$ and $\mathcal{G} \simeq G_{\text{except}}$, where G_{except} is defined as

$$G_{\text{except}} = \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \middle| a \in (\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})^* \text{ and } b \in \mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z} \right\}. \quad (1)$$

The proof consists of three steps. The first step is to prove the vanishing of $H^1(\mathcal{G}_i, E[\ell^i])$ when \mathcal{G} contains a nontrivial homothety. If \mathcal{G} does not contain a nontrivial homothety, we show in Section 3 that \mathcal{G} is isomorphic to $G_{\text{except}} \subseteq \text{GL}_2(\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})$. Finally, the exceptional case $\mathcal{G} \simeq G_{\text{except}}$ is studied in Section 4, where we prove the vanishing of $H^1(\mathcal{G}_i, E[\ell^i])$ except the case $\ell = 3$.

The motivation of this work is as follows. Take $K = \mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{D})$ to be an imaginary quadratic extension with fundamental discriminant $D \neq -3, -4$ where all prime divisors of N split. We also let $y_K \in E(K)$ be the Heegner point associated with the maximal order in K . Kolyvagin [6] proves that, when y_K is of infinite order, $E(K)$ has rank one and the Shafarevich–Tate group $\text{III}(E/K)$ of E over K is finite. Let m be the largest integer such that $y_K \in \ell^m E(K)$ modulo ℓ -torsion points. In [7], Kolyvagin proves the following.

Theorem 3 (Kolyvagin). Suppose that y_K is of infinite order. Assume that ℓ is an odd prime. If the Galois group $\text{Gal}(\mathbf{Q}(E[\ell])/\mathbf{Q})$ is isomorphic to $\text{GL}_2(\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})$, then we have

$$\text{ord}_\ell |\text{III}(E/K)| \leq 2m.$$

This bound for the ℓ -part of $|\text{III}(E/K)|$ is consistent with the conjecture of Birch and Swinnerton–Dyer. In fact, Gross and Zagier [4] obtained a formula for the value of the derivative of the complex L -function of E over K in terms of the height of y_K . This formula, when combined with the conjecture of Birch and Swinnerton–Dyer, yields the following conjectural formula for the ℓ -order of $\text{III}(E/K)$.

Conjecture 4. Suppose that y_K is of infinite order. Then $\text{III}(E/K)$ is finite and its ℓ -order is

$$\text{ord}_\ell |\text{III}(E/K)| = 2m + 2\text{ord}_\ell \left(\frac{|E(K)_{\text{tor}}|}{c \cdot \prod_{q|N} c_q} \right).$$

Here c_q is the number of connected components of the special fiber of the Néron model of E at q , and c is the Manin constant of a modular parametrization of E .

In view of Conjecture 4, it is natural to expect that the assumption that $E(K)$ has no nontrivial ℓ -torsion points should be sufficient to yield the same bound $2m$ as in Theorem 3, even in the case where $\text{Gal}(\mathbf{Q}(E[\ell])/\mathbf{Q})$ is a proper subgroup of $\text{GL}_2(\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})$. We are not proving this result in this article. Instead, under the condition that the mod ℓ Galois representation

$$\rho_{\mathbf{Q}} : \text{Gal}(\bar{\mathbf{Q}}/\mathbf{Q}) \longrightarrow \text{Aut}(E[\ell]) \simeq \text{GL}_2(\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})$$

is *irreducible* over $\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z}$, we show that the main theorem of this article allows us to obtain the same bound $2m$ for $\text{ord}_\ell |\text{III}(E/K)|$ (Theorem 21). See Section 5 for more detailed discussion in this direction.

2. Vanishing of the cohomology groups $H^1(\mathcal{G}_i, E[\ell^i])$

First, we investigate the natural maps between $H^1(\mathcal{G}_i, E[\ell^i])$ for various i 's.

Proposition 5. For each $i \geq 1$, there is a natural injection

$$H^1(\mathcal{G}_i, E[\ell^i]) \longrightarrow H^1(\mathcal{G}_{i+1}, E[\ell^{i+1}]). \quad (2)$$

Proof. There are two natural injections

$$H^1(\mathcal{G}_i, E[\ell^i]) \longrightarrow H^1(\mathcal{G}_{i+1}, E[\ell^i]) \quad (3)$$

and

$$H^1(\mathcal{G}_{i+1}, E[\ell^i]) \longrightarrow H^1(\mathcal{G}_{i+1}, E[\ell^{i+1}]). \quad (4)$$

Indeed, the map (3) is just the inflation in the exact sequence

$$0 \longrightarrow H^1(\mathcal{G}_i, E[\ell^i]) \xrightarrow{\text{Inf}} H^1(\mathcal{G}_{i+1}, E[\ell^i]) \xrightarrow{\text{Res}} H^1(\text{Gal}(L_{i+1}/L_i), E[\ell^i])^{\mathcal{G}_i}. \quad (5)$$

Also, the map (4) is given as follows. The exact sequence

$$0 \longrightarrow E[\ell^i] \longrightarrow E[\ell^{i+1}] \xrightarrow{\ell^i} E[\ell] \longrightarrow 0$$

gives the \mathcal{G}_{i+1} -cohomology long exact sequence, part of which is

$$E[\ell]^{\mathcal{G}_{i+1}} \longrightarrow H^1(\mathcal{G}_{i+1}, E[\ell^i]) \longrightarrow H^1(\mathcal{G}_{i+1}, E[\ell^{i+1}]) \xrightarrow{(\ell^i)_*} H^1(\mathcal{G}_{i+1}, E[\ell]). \quad (6)$$

The group $E[\ell]^{\mathcal{G}_{i+1}}$ is zero by Assumption 1, (b). Therefore, the map

$$H^1(\mathcal{G}_{i+1}, E[\ell^i]) \longrightarrow H^1(\mathcal{G}_{i+1}, E[\ell^{i+1}])$$

is injective. This is (4).

Finally, the composition of (3) and (4) gives (2). \square

The following lemma tells us how to control the size of $H^1(\mathcal{G}_i, E[\ell^i])$ inductively.

Lemma 6. *If the restriction map*

$$\text{Res} : H^1(\mathcal{G}_{i+1}, E[\ell^i]) \longrightarrow H^1(\text{Gal}(L_{i+1}/L_i), E[\ell^i])^{\mathcal{G}_i}$$

in (5) is the zero map, then

$$\dim_{\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z}} \left(H^1(\mathcal{G}_i, E[\ell^i]) \otimes \mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z} \right) = \dim_{\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z}} \left(H^1(\mathcal{G}_{i+1}, E[\ell^{i+1}]) \otimes \mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z} \right).$$

In particular, the above equality is true if $H^1(\text{Gal}(L_{i+1}/L_i), E[\ell^i])^{\mathcal{G}_i} = 0$.

Proof. Consider the short exact sequence

$$0 \longrightarrow E[\ell] \xrightarrow{\iota} E[\ell^{i+1}] \xrightarrow{\ell} E[\ell^i] \longrightarrow 0$$

of \mathcal{G}_{i+1} -modules. Its \mathcal{G}_{i+1} -cohomology long exact sequence shows that

$$(\iota)_* : H^1(\mathcal{G}_{i+1}, E[\ell^i]) \longrightarrow H^1(\mathcal{G}_{i+1}, E[\ell^{i+1}])$$

is injective. Therefore, the kernel of $(\ell^i)_*$ in (6) coincides with that of the endomorphism of multiplication by ℓ^i on $H^1(\mathcal{G}_{i+1}, E[\ell^{i+1}])$.

However, the sequence (5) says that $H^1(\mathcal{G}_i, E[\ell^i])$ is isomorphic to $H^1(\mathcal{G}_{i+1}, E[\ell^i])$. Now, from (6), $H^1(\mathcal{G}_{i+1}, E[\ell^i])$ is the kernel of the multiplication on $H^1(\mathcal{G}_{i+1}, E[\ell^{i+1}])$ by ℓ^i , so the lemma follows. \square

We study the structure of $H^1(\text{Gal}(L_{i+1}/L_i), E[\ell^i])^{\mathcal{G}_i} = \text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}_i}(\text{Gal}(L_{i+1}/L_i), E[\ell^i])$ more closely.

Define \mathcal{A} to be the additive group $M_2(\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})$ of all 2×2 matrices with coefficients in $\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z}$, and turn it into a \mathcal{G}_i -module by first projecting \mathcal{G}_i onto $\mathcal{G} = \mathcal{G}_1$ and then letting it act on \mathcal{A} by conjugation. By definition, this action factors through \mathcal{G} .

Fix a basis for $E[\ell^{i+1}]$. Then, we can identify \mathcal{G}_{i+1} with a subgroup of $\text{GL}_2(\mathbf{Z}/\ell^{i+1}\mathbf{Z})$. An element of $\text{Gal}(L_{i+1}/L_i)$ will be of the form $I_2 + \ell^i A$ for some matrix A with coefficients in $\mathbf{Z}/\ell^{i+1}\mathbf{Z}$, where I_2 is the 2×2 identity matrix in $\text{GL}_2(\mathbf{Z}/\ell^{i+1}\mathbf{Z})$. Note that A modulo ℓ is uniquely determined, independent of the choice of A , hence defines an element of \mathcal{A} . Therefore the map

$$I_2 + \ell^i A \mapsto A \bmod \ell$$

identifies $\text{Gal}(L_{i+1}/L_i)$ with a \mathcal{G}_i -submodule of \mathcal{A} which will be denoted by C_i .

Let f be an element in $\text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}_i}(\text{Gal}(L_{i+1}/L_i), E[\ell^i]) \simeq \text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}_i}(C_i, E[\ell^i])$. Since C_i is of exponent ℓ , the image of f lies in $E[\ell] \subseteq E[\ell^i]$. Moreover, the action of \mathcal{G}_i on C_i factors through $\mathcal{G} = \mathcal{G}_1$. Therefore, we have $\text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}_i}(\text{Gal}(L_{i+1}/L_i), E[\ell^i]) \simeq \text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(C_i, E[\ell])$. In summary, we obtain the isomorphism

$$H^1(\text{Gal}(L_{i+1}/L_i), E[\ell^i])^{\mathcal{G}_i} \simeq \text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(C_i, E[\ell]). \quad (7)$$

When $\text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(C_i, E[\ell]) = 0$, one can control the rank of $H^1(\mathcal{G}_{i+1}, E[\ell^{i+1}])$ inductively. This is the case when \mathcal{G} contains a *homothety*, that is, a $(\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})^*$ -multiple of the identity endomorphism of $E[\ell]$.

Theorem 7. *If \mathcal{G} contains a nontrivial homothety, then $H^1(\mathcal{G}_i, E[\ell^i]) = 0$ for all $i \geq 1$.*

Proof. Let $\langle \eta \rangle$ be the cyclic subgroup of \mathcal{G} generated by a nontrivial homothety η . Then obviously $E[\ell]^{\langle \eta \rangle} = 0$. Further the cohomology group $H^1(\langle \eta \rangle, E[\ell]) = 0$ since the order of $\langle \eta \rangle$ is prime to ℓ . Therefore, by the following Hochschild–Serre spectral sequence

$$0 \longrightarrow H^1(\mathcal{G}/\langle \eta \rangle, E[\ell]^{\langle \eta \rangle}) \longrightarrow H^1(\mathcal{G}, E[\ell]) \longrightarrow H^1(\langle \eta \rangle, E[\ell]),$$

we get $H^1(\mathcal{G}, E[\ell]) = 0$.

Now, assume that $H^1(\mathcal{G}_i, E[\ell^i]) = 0$ for some i . From Lemma 6 and (7), we only need to show that $\text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(C_i, E[\ell]) = 0$. Let $f \in \text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(C_i, E[\ell])$. Note that any homothety acts trivially on \mathcal{A} . So, for any $v \in C_i$, we have

$$f(v) = f(v^\eta) = \eta f(v).$$

But, only the zero element of $E[\ell]$ can be fixed by η , hence $f(v) = 0$. Therefore $f \equiv 0$. \square

3. The structure of \mathcal{G}

The main theorem in this section is

Theorem 8. *If \mathcal{G} does not contain a nontrivial homothety, then \mathcal{G} can be represented as*

$$G_{\text{except}} = \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \middle| a \in (\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})^* \text{ and } b \in \mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z} \right\}$$

with respect to some basis for $E[\ell]$.

The proof of this theorem will be given throughout this section. The main tool is a result of Serre [12, Sections 1–2]. Serre studies the image of the representation

$$\rho_K : \text{Gal}(\bar{K}/K) \longrightarrow \text{GL}(E[\ell])$$

restricted to the local Galois group. Together with a group theoretic argument, Serre's result is used to classify all the possible subgroups of $\text{GL}_2(\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})$ without homotheties that can occur as our Galois group \mathcal{G} . Our assumption that $E(K)$ has no ℓ -torsion points also helps us limit the possibilities.

3.1. Subgroups of $\text{GL}(V)$

The definitions in this subsection are taken from [12, Sections 1–2]. We summarize what we need for our study of \mathcal{G} .

Let V be a two-dimensional vector space over $\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z}$. By $\text{GL}(V)$, we mean the group of all linear automorphisms of V . For a 1-dimensional subspace V_1 of V , define $B(V_1) \subseteq \text{GL}(V)$ to be the subgroup consisting of all $s \in \text{GL}(V)$ such that $sV_1 = V_1$. Such a subgroup $B(V_1)$ is called a *Borel subgroup* of $\text{GL}(V)$ defined by V_1 . The subspace V_1 is the unique 1-dimensional subspace of V which is stable under $B(V_1)$. By choosing a basis for V appropriately, such a subgroup $B(V_1)$ can be represented by 2×2 matrices

$$B(V_1) = \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ 0 & d \end{pmatrix} \middle| a, d \in (\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})^* \text{ and } b \in \mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z} \right\}.$$

When V_1 and V_2 are two distinct 1-dimensional subspaces of V , we let $C(V_1, V_2) \subseteq \text{GL}(V)$ be the set of all the elements $s \in \text{GL}(V)$ such that $sV_1 = V_1$ and $sV_2 = V_2$. The subgroup $C(V_1, V_2)$ is called the *split Cartan subgroup* of $\text{GL}(V)$ defined by V_1 and V_2 . In the appropriate basis for V , $C(V_1, V_2)$ takes the form

$$C(V_1, V_2) = \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} a & 0 \\ 0 & c \end{pmatrix} \middle| a, c \in (\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})^* \right\}.$$

Therefore $C(V_1, V_2)$ is isomorphic to a product of two cyclic groups of order $\ell - 1$. We also note that V_1 and V_2 are the only 1-dimensional subspaces of V which are stable under $C(V_1, V_2)$. Let C_1 be the subgroup of $C(V_1, V_2)$, consisting of all elements whose actions on V_1 are trivial. Similarly, one can define C_2 to be the subgroup of $C(V_1, V_2)$ which acts trivially on V_2 . Then C_1 and C_2 can be represented by matrices of the form $\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & * \end{pmatrix}$ and $\begin{pmatrix} * & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$. Such subgroups C_1 and C_2 are called *semi-split Cartan subgroups* of $\mathrm{GL}(V)$.

Let \mathbf{F}_{ℓ^2} be the unique quadratic extension of the field $\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z}$. Then one can embed $\mathbf{F}_{\ell^2}^*$ into $\mathrm{GL}(V)$, by choosing a basis for \mathbf{F}_{ℓ^2} over $\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z}$ and by representing $\mathbf{F}_{\ell^2}^*$ in $\mathrm{GL}(V)$ via the regular representation with respect to the chosen basis for \mathbf{F}_{ℓ^2} . A *nonsplit Cartan subgroup* of $\mathrm{GL}(V)$ is, by definition, a subgroup of $\mathrm{GL}(V)$ which is conjugate to the image of $\mathbf{F}_{\ell^2}^*$ under this embedding in $\mathrm{GL}(V)$. Any nonsplit Cartan subgroup is cyclic of order $\ell^2 - 1$. Relevant to our study are the facts that the subgroup $(\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})^*$ in $\mathbf{F}_{\ell^2}^*$ maps onto the homotheties of $\mathrm{GL}(V)$ regardless of the choice of a basis for \mathbf{F}_{ℓ^2} , and thus that any nonsplit Cartan subgroup of $\mathrm{GL}(V)$ contains all homotheties.

Finally, we define the *Cartan subgroups* of $\mathrm{PGL}(V) = \mathrm{GL}(V)/(\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})^*$ to be the images in $\mathrm{PGL}(V)$ of the corresponding Cartan subgroups of $\mathrm{GL}(V)$. Clearly, a split and a nonsplit Cartan subgroup of $\mathrm{PGL}(V)$ are both cyclic and are of order $\ell - 1$ and $\ell + 1$, respectively.

We state a lemma which will be useful later.

Lemma 9. *If $s \in \mathrm{GL}(V)$ is of order prime to ℓ , then the cyclic subgroup generated by s is contained in a Cartan subgroup of $\mathrm{GL}(V)$.*

Proof. The element s is (absolutely) semi-simple since its order is prime to ℓ . So, the cyclic group generated by s is a commutative semi-simple subgroup of $\mathrm{GL}(V)$. However, every maximal commutative semi-simple subgroup of $\mathrm{GL}(V)$ is a Cartan subgroup (See [9, Lemma 12.2, Chapter 18]), hence the lemma follows. \square

3.2. Conditions on \mathcal{G}

Let v be the prime of K over ℓ as in Assumption (a) of 1, that is v is unramified in K/\mathbf{Q} and E does not have an additive reduction over K_v . We fix a decomposition group $D = D_v$ of v in $\mathrm{Gal}(\bar{K}/K)$, and let $I = I_v$ be the inertia group of v in D_v .

Proposition 10. *Assume that \mathcal{G} contains no nontrivial homothety. Then*

- (a) *E has either ordinary or multiplicative reduction over K_v .*
- (b) *\mathcal{G} contains a semi-split Cartan subgroup of $\mathrm{GL}(E[\ell])$. In particular, \mathcal{G} contains a cyclic subgroup of order $\ell - 1$.*

Proof. If E has a supersingular reduction over K_v , the subgroup $\rho_K(I) \subseteq \mathcal{G}$ is a nonsplit Cartan subgroup of $\mathrm{GL}(E[\ell])$ [12, Proposition 12] and it would contain all homotheties, which contradicts our assumption on \mathcal{G} . Therefore, we conclude that the reduction type of E over K_v is either ordinary or multiplicative. In either case, the

subgroup $\rho_K(I) \subseteq \mathcal{G}$ contains a semi-split Cartan subgroup of $\mathrm{GL}(E[\ell])$. (See [12, Corollaire to Proposition 11] and [12, Corollaire to Proposition 13]). \square

3.3. The case where ℓ does not divide $|\mathcal{G}|$

We investigate the case when ℓ does not divide $|\mathcal{G}|$.

As before, let V be a two-dimensional vector space over $\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z}$. The following classification result is [12, Proposition 16].

Proposition 11. *If H is a subgroup of $\mathrm{PGL}(V)$ whose order is not divisible by ℓ , then H is cyclic, dihedral, or isomorphic to one of the groups \mathcal{A}_4 , \mathcal{S}_4 and \mathcal{A}_5 .*

We claim that, if ℓ does not divide $|\mathcal{G}|$, then \mathcal{G} must contain a nontrivial homothety.

The rest of this subsection will be devoted to the proof of this claim. From now on, we work under the assumption that the group \mathcal{G} has no nontrivial homotheties. Propositions 11 and 10 will lead us into a case by case analysis and yield a contradiction for all cases.

Since \mathcal{G} is assumed to have no homothety, its image $\tilde{\mathcal{G}}$ in $\mathrm{PGL}(E[\ell])$ is isomorphic to \mathcal{G} . By Proposition 11, there are three cases: \mathcal{G} is cyclic, dihedral or isomorphic to one of the groups \mathcal{A}_4 , \mathcal{S}_4 and \mathcal{A}_5 .

3.3.1. \mathcal{G} cyclic

By Lemma 9, \mathcal{G} is contained in a Cartan subgroup S of $\mathrm{GL}(E[\ell])$. And, by Proposition 10, \mathcal{G} contains a semi-split Cartan subgroup C of $\mathrm{GL}(E[\ell])$, so we have $C \subseteq \mathcal{G} \subseteq S$ as subgroups of $\mathrm{GL}(E[\ell])$.

We consider the case where S is nonsplit, so the order $|S|$ is $\ell^2 - 1$. Recall that \mathcal{G} maps isomorphically onto $\tilde{\mathcal{G}}$. Therefore, $\ell - 1$ divides $|\tilde{\mathcal{G}}|$, hence it also divides the order of the image \tilde{S} of S in $\mathrm{PGL}(E[\ell])$, which is just $\ell + 1$. But, this is impossible unless $\ell = 3$. When $\ell = 3$, the group S is isomorphic to \mathbf{F}_9^* , and its subgroup consisting of all homotheties corresponds to \mathbf{F}_3^* in \mathbf{F}_9^* . It is easy to check that every nontrivial subgroup of \mathbf{F}_9^* contains \mathbf{F}_3^* . Therefore \mathcal{G} must also contain a nontrivial homothety.

Next, we assume that S is split. From the inclusion $C \subseteq \mathcal{G} \subseteq S$, it follows that \mathcal{G} should be equal to C , otherwise \mathcal{G} would have a nontrivial homothety. But $C = \mathcal{G}$ is also impossible since it would violate the ℓ -torsion freeness of $E(K)$.

3.3.2. \mathcal{G} dihedral

Next, we deal with the case where \mathcal{G} is isomorphic to a dihedral group D_k of order $2k$ for some k .

First, let us assume $\ell > 3$. Again we denote by C a semi-split Cartan subgroup contained in \mathcal{G} , which is just a cyclic group of order $\ell - 1 \geq 4$. In particular, we have $k \geq 2$. But, if $k = 2$, then ℓ must be 5, and C is of order 4. However, D_2 cannot have such a subgroup. So, we have $k > 2$.

Lemma 12. Let $D_k = \langle x, y \mid x^2 = 1, y^k = 1, xy^i x^{-1} = y^{-i} \text{ for all } i \rangle$ be the dihedral group with $k > 2$, generated by the elements x and y of order 2 and k respectively. If D_k contains a cyclic group C of order > 2 , then C is a subgroup of $\langle y \rangle$.

Proof. Any element of the form xy^i is of order 2, so no such element can generate C . \square

Following the notation in the lemma, we let $x, y \in \mathcal{G}$ be the elements of order 2 and k , respectively. Then, the lemma implies that $C \subseteq \langle y \rangle$. Fix a basis for $E[\ell]$ such that the subgroup C is represented by the matrices of the form $\begin{pmatrix} * & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$. Let $x = \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix}$. Then we have

$$\begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} s & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} s^{-1} & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix}$$

for all $s \in (\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})^*$. Or equivalently

$$\begin{aligned} as &= s^{-1}a, & b &= s^{-1}b, \\ cs &= c, & d &= d \end{aligned}$$

for all $s \in (\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})^*$. Obviously, such $\begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix} \in \text{GL}_2(\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})$ cannot exist.

Next, let us assume that $\ell = 3$. Again, we fix a basis for $\text{GL}(E[3])$ so that the subgroup C is represented as $\left\{ \begin{pmatrix} \pm 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \right\}$. So, in particular, $\tau := \begin{pmatrix} -1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \in \mathcal{G}$. One can show that, if $\sigma \in \text{GL}_2(\mathbf{Z}/3\mathbf{Z})$ is neither τ nor $\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$, then σ and τ generates an element in $\text{GL}_2(\mathbf{Z}/3\mathbf{Z})$, which is either a nontrivial homothety or an element of order 3 (We omit this easy but long computations). This proves that $C = \mathcal{G}$, which is a contradiction to the assumption that $E(K)$ has no ℓ -torsion points.

3.3.3. \mathcal{G} is $\mathcal{A}_4, \mathcal{S}_4$ or \mathcal{A}_5

Here ℓ cannot be 3, since 3 divides the orders of $\mathcal{A}_4, \mathcal{S}_4$ and \mathcal{A}_5 . We again denote by C the subgroup of \mathcal{G} which is cyclic of order $\ell - 1$ as in Proposition 10. Let us first assume that $\ell > 5$. Then, one of the groups $\mathcal{A}_4, \mathcal{S}_4$ and \mathcal{A}_5 must contain C , which is cyclic of order ≥ 6 . This is impossible. We also note that 5 divides the order of \mathcal{A}_5 . Therefore we have to do the case that $\ell = 5$ and \mathcal{G} is isomorphic to either \mathcal{A}_4 or \mathcal{S}_4 . But, the group \mathcal{A}_4 does not contain an element of order 4, that is, there is no 4-cycle in \mathcal{A}_4 . The only case left is $\ell = 5$ and \mathcal{G} isomorphic to \mathcal{S}_4 .

Choose a basis for $\text{GL}(E[5])$, so that C is of the form $\begin{pmatrix} * & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$. Then, there are two generators $\begin{pmatrix} 2 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$ and $\begin{pmatrix} 3 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$ of C . Since their traces are different they are not conjugate to each other. However, the 4-cycles in \mathcal{S}_4 form a single conjugacy class, therefore \mathcal{S}_4 cannot be isomorphic to \mathcal{G} .

3.4. The case where ℓ divides $|\mathcal{G}|$

Now, we study the case when ℓ divides $|\mathcal{G}|$

Proposition 13. *If ℓ divides the order of the Galois group \mathcal{G} , then \mathcal{G} is either isomorphic to the full group $\mathrm{GL}(E[\ell])$ or is contained in a Borel subgroup of $\mathrm{GL}(E[\ell])$.*

Proof. By [12, Proposition 15], either \mathcal{G} contains $\mathrm{SL}(E[\ell])$ or \mathcal{G} is contained in a Borel subgroup of $\mathrm{GL}(E[\ell])$.

Recall that ν is assumed to be unramified in K/\mathbf{Q} . Therefore the extension K/\mathbf{Q} is linearly disjoint with the cyclotomic extension $\mathbf{Q}(\mu_\ell)/\mathbf{Q}$. If \mathcal{G} contains $\mathrm{SL}(E[\ell])$, then it must be equal to $\mathrm{GL}(E[\ell])$ since the determinant map

$$\det : \mathcal{G} \longrightarrow (\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})^*$$

is surjective due to Weil pairing on $E[\ell]$. \square

We keep the assumption that \mathcal{G} has no homothety, and we further assume that ℓ divides the order of \mathcal{G} . We will finish the proof of Theorem 8.

By Proposition 10, \mathcal{G} contains a semi-split Cartan subgroup \mathcal{H} . This subgroup determines two 1-dimensional $\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z}$ -subspaces V_1 and V_2 of $E[\ell]$, which are the common eigenspaces of all the elements of \mathcal{H} , therefore the *only* stable subspaces under \mathcal{H} . Using Proposition 13, we see that \mathcal{G} must be contained in the Borel subgroup corresponding to either V_1 or V_2 . Also, \mathcal{G} must contain an element of order ℓ because ℓ is assumed to divide the order of \mathcal{G} . Now, from the assumption that $E[\ell]$ has no \mathcal{G} -fixed points and no homotheties, it follows directly that \mathcal{G} is isomorphic to

$$G_{\text{except}} = \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \middle| a \in (\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})^* \text{ and } b \in \mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z} \right\}.$$

The proof of Theorem 8 is completed. \square

4. The exceptional case

We prove the vanishing of $H^1(\mathcal{G}_i, E[\ell^i])$ when $\mathcal{G} \simeq G_{\text{except}}$ and $\ell \neq 3$. Throughout this section, we will assume that $\ell \neq 3$. However, the proof of the vanishing works well for $\ell = 3$ in some cases as well. See Remark 20 for more details.

4.1. Vanishing of $H^1(\mathcal{G}_i, E[\ell^i])$

We fix a system of compatible basis for $E[\ell^i]$ for all $i \geq 1$, or equivalently, a basis for the Tate module $T_\ell(E)$ of E . This enables us to identify \mathcal{G}_i with a subgroup of $\mathrm{GL}_2(\mathbf{Z}/\ell^i\mathbf{Z})$. In particular, we have the identification $\mathcal{G} = G_{\text{except}}$ at the first level $i = 1$.

We recall the following notations from Section 2; we let \mathcal{G}_i act on $\mathcal{A} = M_2(\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})$ by conjugation. The group $\text{Gal}(L_{i+1}/L_i)$ is identified with a \mathcal{G}_i -submodule \mathcal{C}_i of \mathcal{A} via the identification

$$I_2 + \ell^i A \mapsto A \bmod \ell. \quad (8)$$

From all this, we have that

$$H^1(\text{Gal}(L_{i+1}/L_i), E[\ell^i])^{\mathcal{G}_i} \simeq \text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(\mathcal{C}_i, E[\ell]). \quad (9)$$

One can classify all the possible \mathcal{G} -submodules of $\mathcal{A}_0 \subseteq \mathcal{A}$, where \mathcal{A}_0 is defined by $\mathcal{A}_0 = \{A \in \mathcal{A} \mid \text{Tr} A = 0\}$. Let $w = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$, $u = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix}$ and $v = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$ be elements of \mathcal{A}_0 . And also let $\mathcal{W} = \langle w \rangle$ and $\mathcal{U} = \langle w, u \rangle$ be subspaces of \mathcal{A}_0 .

Note that \mathcal{G} is generated by $\tau := \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$ and $\sigma_a := \begin{pmatrix} a & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$ for all $a \in (\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})^*$.

Proposition 14. *The subspaces $\{0\}, \mathcal{W}, \mathcal{U}$ and \mathcal{A}_0 are the only \mathcal{G} -submodules of \mathcal{A}_0 .*

Proof. One checks easily that \mathcal{W} and \mathcal{U} are invariant under the action of \mathcal{G} .

Take $\{w, u, v\}$ as a basis of \mathcal{A}_0 . Then an elementary computation shows that the matrix

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & -2 & -1 \\ 0 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

represents the action of $\tau \in \mathcal{G}$ on \mathcal{A}_0 . So, the only subspaces invariant under the action of τ are $\{0\}, \mathcal{W}, \mathcal{U}$ and \mathcal{A}_0 . \square

Proposition 15. *We have the following*

- (a) $\text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(\mathcal{A}_0, E[\ell]) = 0$.
- (b) $\text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(\mathcal{U}, E[\ell]) \simeq \mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z}$.
- (c) $\text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(\mathcal{W}, E[\ell]) \simeq \mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z}$.

Proof. With respect to the basis $\{w, u, v\}$, the action of $\sigma_a = \begin{pmatrix} a & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \in \mathcal{G}$ on \mathcal{A}_0 is represented by

$$\begin{pmatrix} a & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & a^{-1} \end{pmatrix}.$$

Any map $f \in \text{Hom}(\mathcal{A}_0, E[\ell])$ will be written as the matrix

$$f = \begin{pmatrix} a_{11} & a_{12} & a_{13} \\ a_{21} & a_{22} & a_{23} \end{pmatrix}$$

with coefficients in $\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z}$. Then, f is \mathcal{G} -equivariant if and only if

$$\begin{pmatrix} a_{11} & a_{12} & a_{13} \\ a_{21} & a_{22} & a_{23} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -2 & -1 \\ 0 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} a_{11} & a_{12} & a_{13} \\ a_{21} & a_{22} & a_{23} \end{pmatrix}$$

and

$$\begin{pmatrix} a_{11} & a_{12} & a_{13} \\ a_{21} & a_{22} & a_{23} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} a & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & a^{-1} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} a & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} a_{11} & a_{12} & a_{13} \\ a_{21} & a_{22} & a_{23} \end{pmatrix}$$

for all $a \in (\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})^*$. Solving these linear conditions on a_{ij} , we get $a_{ij} = 0$ for all i and j , therefore, $f = 0$. We proved (a).

Similarly, the actions of τ and σ_a on \mathcal{U} , with respect to the basis $\{w, u\}$, are represented by the matrices

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & -2 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \quad \text{and} \quad \begin{pmatrix} a & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix},$$

respectively. Again, we write $f \in \text{Hom}(\mathcal{U}, E[\ell])$ as

$$f = \begin{pmatrix} a_{11} & a_{12} \\ a_{21} & a_{22} \end{pmatrix}.$$

In this case, the same computation as above says that f is \mathcal{G} -equivariant when

$$f = a_{11} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -2 \end{pmatrix}.$$

In particular, $\text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(\mathcal{U}, E[\ell])$ is isomorphic to $\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z}$ and is generated by the map which sends w and u to P_1 and $-2Q_1$, respectively.

For (c), the same argument is used. We omit the details, but we note that a generator of $\text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(\mathcal{W}, E[\ell]) \simeq \mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z}$ can be chosen so as to send w to P_1 . \square

Corollary 16. *Let \mathcal{S} be a \mathcal{G} -submodule of \mathcal{A}_0 , and let $f \in \text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(\mathcal{S}, E[\ell])$. The function f is nonzero if and only if w is in \mathcal{S} and $f(w) \neq 0$.*

Proof. In the two previous propositions, we computed $\text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(\mathcal{S}, E[\ell])$ for any \mathcal{G} -submodules \mathcal{S} of \mathcal{A}_0 . The corollary now follows from the description of generators of $\text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(\mathcal{S}, E[\ell])$. \square

A similar result is needed for \mathcal{G} -submodules of \mathcal{A} , rather than those of \mathcal{A}_0 . Let $\mathcal{H} = \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} a & 0 \\ 0 & a \end{pmatrix} \in \mathcal{A} \mid a \in \mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z} \right\}$. Then, \mathcal{G} acts on \mathcal{H} trivially and there is a decomposition $\mathcal{A} = \mathcal{A}_0 \oplus \mathcal{H}$ as \mathcal{G} modules. Since $E[\ell]$ has no \mathcal{G} -invariant elements we have that $\text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(\mathcal{H}, E[\ell]) = 0$.

Proposition 17. *Let \mathcal{X} be a \mathcal{G} -submodule of \mathcal{A} and let $f \in \text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(\mathcal{X}, E[\ell])$. The function f is nonzero if and only if w is in \mathcal{X} and $f(w) \neq 0$.*

Proof. If $\mathcal{H} \subseteq \mathcal{X}$, then \mathcal{H} occurs as a direct summand of \mathcal{X} as \mathcal{G} -modules, i.e. $\mathcal{X} = \mathcal{X}_0 \oplus \mathcal{H}$ with $\mathcal{X}_0 = \mathcal{X} \cap \mathcal{A}_0$. Then

$$\text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(\mathcal{X}, E[\ell]) = \text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(\mathcal{X}_0, E[\ell]) \oplus \text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(\mathcal{H}, E[\ell]) = \text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(\mathcal{X}_0, E[\ell]),$$

hence Corollary 16 gives the desired result.

When $\mathcal{H} \not\subseteq \mathcal{X}$ and $\mathcal{X} \neq 0$, we note that the map

$$i : \mathcal{X} \hookrightarrow \mathcal{A} \rightarrow \mathcal{A}/\mathcal{H} \simeq \mathcal{A}_0$$

is injective. Therefore, $i(\mathcal{X})$ is isomorphic to \mathcal{W}, \mathcal{U} or \mathcal{A}_0 by Proposition 14. In particular, \mathcal{X} must contain an element of the form $x = w + h$ for some $h \in \mathcal{H}$. Then for any $a \in (\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})^*$, $\sigma_a x - x = (a - 1)w \in \mathcal{X}$, or $w \in \mathcal{X}$. Since $\text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(\mathcal{X}, E[\ell]) = \text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(i(\mathcal{X}), E[\ell])$ the proof again follows from Corollary 16. \square

We are now ready to prove

Theorem 18. *In the exceptional case $\mathcal{G} = G_{\text{except}}$, we have $H^1(\mathcal{G}_i, E[\ell^i]) = 0$ for all $i \geq 1$.*

Proof. First, we do the case $i = 1$. As before, let $\tau := \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$ and $\sigma_a = \begin{pmatrix} a & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$ be in \mathcal{G} for some $a \in (\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})^*$. Consider the inflation-restriction sequence

$$0 \longrightarrow H^1(\mathcal{G}/\langle \tau \rangle, E[\ell]^{\langle \tau \rangle}) \longrightarrow H^1(\mathcal{G}, E[\ell]) \longrightarrow H^1(\langle \tau \rangle, E[\ell])^{\mathcal{G}/\langle \tau \rangle}.$$

The group $H^1(\mathcal{G}/\langle \tau \rangle, E[\ell]^{\langle \tau \rangle})$ is zero since $|\mathcal{G}/\langle \tau \rangle|$ is prime to ℓ . It remains to show the vanishing of $H^1(\langle \tau \rangle, E[\ell])^{\mathcal{G}/\langle \tau \rangle}$.

Let $P = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$ and $Q = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}$ be the chosen basis of $E[\ell]$. If $f : \langle \tau \rangle \rightarrow E[\ell]$ is a cocycle, representing a cohomology class $[f]$ in $H^1(\langle \tau \rangle, E[\ell])$, the association

$[f] \mapsto f(\tau)$ defines an isomorphism

$$H^1(\langle \tau \rangle, E[\ell]) \simeq \frac{\{X \in E[\ell] \mid (1 + \tau + \cdots + \tau^{\ell-1})X = O\}}{(1 - \tau)E[\ell]}.$$

Since $1 + \tau + \cdots + \tau^{\ell-1} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$ and $(1 - \tau)E[\ell] = \langle P \rangle$, we have

$$H^1(\langle \tau \rangle, E[\ell]) \simeq E[\ell]/\langle P \rangle \simeq \langle Q \rangle.$$

Now it is sufficient to prove that the cohomology class ϕ represented by the cocycle $f : \tau \mapsto Q$ is not fixed by the action of σ_a for some $a \in (\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})^*$.

Note that $(\sigma_a)^{-1}\tau\sigma_a = \tau^{\bar{a}}$ for some $\bar{a} \in (\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})^*$ with $a\bar{a} = 1$. The cohomology class ϕ^{σ_a} is represented by the cocycle f^{σ_a} , which sends τ to

$$\begin{aligned} f^{\sigma_a}(\tau) &= \sigma_a f(\tau^{\bar{a}}) = \sigma_a(1 + \tau + \cdots + \tau^{\bar{a}-1})f(\tau) \\ &= \begin{pmatrix} a & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \bar{a} & \bar{a}(\bar{a} - 1)/2 \\ 0 & \bar{a} \end{pmatrix} f(\tau) \\ &= \begin{pmatrix} 1 & (\bar{a} - 1)/2 \\ 0 & \bar{a} \end{pmatrix} f(\tau) \\ &= \frac{\bar{a} - 1}{2}P + \bar{a}Q \equiv \bar{a}Q \pmod{\langle P \rangle}. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, $\phi \neq \phi^{\sigma_a}$ if $a \neq 1$. This proves that $H^1(\langle \tau \rangle, E[\ell])^{\mathcal{G}/\langle \tau \rangle} = 0$.

Now, let $i \geq 1$. Consider the restriction map

$$\text{Res} : H^1(\mathcal{G}_{i+1}, E[\ell^i]) \longrightarrow H^1(\text{Gal}(L_{i+1}/L_i), E[\ell^i])^{\mathcal{G}_i} \simeq \text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(\mathcal{C}_i, E[\ell]),$$

which appeared in the exact sequence (5). We claim that this map is trivial. Once this claim is verified, the theorem will follow from Lemma 6.

Now, let g be a cocycle, representing a cohomology class in $H^1(\mathcal{G}_{i+1}, E[\ell^i])$ and let $f = \text{Res}(g) \in \text{Hom}_{\mathcal{G}}(\mathcal{C}_i, E[\ell])$. By Proposition 17, we only need to show that $f(w) = 0$. Via the identification (8), the element w corresponds to the matrix

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & \ell^i \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}.$$

Let $I_i := \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$ be the (multiplicative) identity element in the ring $M_2(\mathbf{Z}/\ell^{i+1}\mathbf{Z})$ of 2×2 matrices with coefficients in $\mathbf{Z}/\ell^{i+1}\mathbf{Z}$. We will show in Lemma 19 that there

exists $A \in \mathcal{G}_{i+1}$ such that $A^{\ell^i} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \ell^i \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$ and that

$$I_i + A + A^2 + \cdots + A^{\ell^i-1} = \ell^i \cdot M$$

for some $M \in M_2(\mathbf{Z}/\ell^{i+1}\mathbf{Z})$. Using this lemma, we compute

$$\begin{aligned} g \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \ell^i \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} &= g \left(A^{\ell^i} \right) \\ &= (I_i + A + A^2 + \cdots + A^{\ell^i-1})g(A) \\ &= \ell^i \cdot M g(A). \end{aligned}$$

But, the cocycle g takes values in $E[\ell^i]$, so $g \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \ell^i \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} = 0$, and hence $f(w) = 0$. \square

Lemma 19. *For each $i \geq 1$, there exists $A \in \mathcal{G}_{i+1}$ such that*

- (a) $A^{\ell^i} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \ell^i \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$.
- (b) Let $I_i := \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$ be in the ring $M_2(\mathbf{Z}/\ell^{i+1}\mathbf{Z})$ of 2×2 matrices with coefficients in $\mathbf{Z}/\ell^{i+1}\mathbf{Z}$. Then, in $M_2(\mathbf{Z}/\ell^{i+1}\mathbf{Z})$, we have

$$I_i + A + A^2 + \cdots + A^{\ell^i-1} = \ell^i \cdot M$$

for some $M \in M_2(\mathbf{Z}/\ell^{i+1}\mathbf{Z})$.

Proof. When $i = 1$, we let

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 1 + \ell p & 1 + \ell q \\ \ell r & 1 + \ell s \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + \ell \cdot \begin{pmatrix} p & q \\ r & s \end{pmatrix}$$

in $\mathcal{G}_2 \subseteq \text{GL}_2(\mathbf{Z}/\ell^2\mathbf{Z})$ be any lift of τ for some integers p, q, r and s .

We will prove that, for any $n \geq 1$,

$$A^n = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & n \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + \ell \cdot \begin{pmatrix} np + \frac{n(n-1)}{2}r & a_n p + b_n q + c_n r + d_n s \\ nr & \frac{n(n-1)}{2}r + ns \end{pmatrix}, \quad (10)$$

where the sequences a_n, b_n, c_n and d_n are defined as

$$\begin{aligned} a_n &= n(n-1)/2, & b_n &= n, \\ c_n &= n(n-1)(n-2)/6, & d_n &= n(n-1)/2. \end{aligned}$$

This formula is clear for $n = 1$. Now, we prove this for $n \geq 1$. Note that the following computation is in \mathcal{G}_2 , so any multiple of ℓ^2 is replaced by 0.

$$\begin{aligned}
A^n \cdot A &= \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} 1 & n \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + \ell \cdot \begin{pmatrix} np + \frac{n(n-1)}{2}r & a_n p + b_n q + c_n r + d_n s \\ nr & \frac{n(n-1)}{2}r + ns \end{pmatrix} \right\} \\
&\times \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + \ell \cdot \begin{pmatrix} p & q \\ r & s \end{pmatrix} \right\} \\
&= \begin{pmatrix} 1 & n+1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + \ell \begin{pmatrix} 1 & n \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} p & q \\ r & s \end{pmatrix} \\
&\quad + \ell \begin{pmatrix} np + \frac{n(n-1)}{2}r & a_n p + b_n q + c_n r + d_n s \\ nr & \frac{n(n-1)}{2}r + ns \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \\
&= \begin{pmatrix} 1 & n+1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + \ell \begin{pmatrix} p + nr & q + ns \\ r & s \end{pmatrix} \\
&\quad + \ell \begin{pmatrix} np + \frac{n(n-1)}{2}r & (np + \frac{n(n-1)}{2}r) + (a_n p + b_n q + c_n r + d_n s) \\ nr & nr + \frac{n(n-1)}{2}r + ns \end{pmatrix} \\
&= \begin{pmatrix} 1 & n+1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \\
&\quad + \ell \begin{pmatrix} (n+1)p + \frac{n(n+1)}{2}r & (np + q + \frac{n(n-1)}{2}r + ns) \\ (n+1)r & + (a_n p + b_n q + c_n r + d_n s) \end{pmatrix} \\
&\quad + \ell \begin{pmatrix} & \frac{n(n+1)}{2}r + (n+1)s \end{pmatrix}.
\end{aligned}$$

So, the Eq. (10) is proved if the sequences a_n, b_n, c_n and d_n satisfy

$$\begin{aligned} a_{n+1} &= n + a_n, & b_{n+1} &= 1 + b_n, \\ c_{n+1} &= \frac{n(n-1)}{2} + c_n, & d_{n+1} &= n + d_n. \end{aligned}$$

This is immediate from the definitions, and (10) follows.

In particular, when $n = \ell$, all of a_ℓ, b_ℓ, c_ℓ and d_ℓ are divisible by ℓ . (We note here that this is the only place where the assumption $\ell \neq 3$ is needed.) Hence, from (10),

$$A^\ell = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \ell \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

in \mathcal{G}_2 . For (b), we use (10) to compute

$$I_0 + A + \cdots + A^{\ell-1} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \cdots + \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \ell-1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + \ell M$$

$$= \ell \begin{pmatrix} 1 & (\ell-1)/2 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + \ell M$$

for some $M \in M_2(\mathbf{Z}/\ell^2\mathbf{Z})$. We proved (b) for $i = 1$.

Assume that $i \geq 2$. Let $A \in \mathcal{G}_i$ be such that

$$A^{\ell^{i-1}} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \ell^{i-1} \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

in \mathcal{G}_i , and such that

$$I_{i-1} + A + \cdots + A^{\ell^{i-1}-1} = \ell^{i-1} M$$

in $M_2(\mathbf{Z}/\ell^i\mathbf{Z})$ for some $M \in M_2(\mathbf{Z}/\ell^i\mathbf{Z})$.

Choose any lift $\hat{A} \in \mathcal{G}_{i+1}$ of A . Let $T := (\hat{A})^{\ell^{i-1}}$ in \mathcal{G}_{i+1} . Then, the projection of T in \mathcal{G}_i is equal to $A^{\ell^{i-1}}$. Therefore, we have

$$T = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \ell^{i-1} \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + \ell^i \begin{pmatrix} p & q \\ r & s \end{pmatrix}$$

for some integers p, q, r and s . For $n \geq 1$, we will prove the following formula inductively.

$$T^n = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & n\ell^{i-1} \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + \ell^i \cdot n \begin{pmatrix} p & q \\ r & s \end{pmatrix}. \quad (11)$$

The case $n = 1$ is clear. In the following computation, we note that any multiple of ℓ^{2i-1} can be replaced by zero, because the computation is in \mathcal{G}_{i+1} .

$$\begin{aligned} T^n \cdot T &= \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} 1 & n\ell^{i-1} \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + \ell^i \cdot n \begin{pmatrix} p & q \\ r & s \end{pmatrix} \right\} \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \ell^{i-1} \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + \ell^i \begin{pmatrix} p & q \\ r & s \end{pmatrix} \right\} \\ &= \begin{pmatrix} 1 & (n+1)\ell^{i-1} \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + \ell^i \cdot n \begin{pmatrix} p & q \\ r & s \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \ell^{i-1} \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + \ell^i \begin{pmatrix} 1 & n\ell^{i-1} \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} p & q \\ r & s \end{pmatrix} \\ &= \begin{pmatrix} 1 & (n+1)\ell^{i-1} \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + \ell^i \left\{ n \begin{pmatrix} p & q \\ r & s \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} p & q \\ r & s \end{pmatrix} \right\} \\ &= \begin{pmatrix} 1 & (n+1)\ell^{i-1} \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + \ell^i \cdot (n+1) \begin{pmatrix} p & q \\ r & s \end{pmatrix}. \end{aligned}$$

The Eq. (11) is proved.

Now, take $n = \ell$. Then, we have

$$(\hat{A})^{\ell^i} = T^\ell = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \ell^i \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

in \mathcal{G}_{i+1} . The part (a) is proved.

It remains to prove (b). First, we note that

$$I_i + \hat{A} + (\hat{A})^2 + \cdots + (\hat{A})^{\ell^{i-1}-1} = \ell^{i-1} \hat{M}$$

for some $\hat{M} \in M_2(\mathbf{Z}/\ell^{i+1}\mathbf{Z})$. From (11), we have

$$\begin{aligned} I_i + T + T^2 + \cdots + T^{\ell-1} &= \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \ell^{i-1} \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + \cdots + \begin{pmatrix} 1 & (\ell-1)\ell^{i-1} \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + \ell \hat{N} \\ &= \ell \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \ell^{i-1}(\ell-1)/2 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + \ell \hat{N} \\ &= \ell \hat{N}' \end{aligned}$$

for some $\hat{N}, \hat{N}' \in M_2(\mathbf{Z}/\ell^{i+1}\mathbf{Z})$. Therefore,

$$\begin{aligned} I_i + \hat{A} + (\hat{A})^2 + \cdots + (\hat{A})^{\ell^i-1} &= (I_i + T + T^2 + \cdots + T^{\ell-1})(I_i + \hat{A} + (\hat{A})^2 \\ &\quad + \cdots + (\hat{A})^{\ell^{i-1}-1}) \\ &= (\ell \hat{N}')(\ell^{i-1} \hat{M}) = \ell^i (\hat{N}' \hat{M}). \end{aligned}$$

The lemma is proved. \square

Remark 20. The assumption $\ell \neq 3$ is needed only in the proof of Lemma 19. We investigate the case $\ell = 3$ more closely here.

As in the proof, let $A \in \mathcal{G}_2$ be a lift of τ with

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + \ell \cdot \begin{pmatrix} p & q \\ r & s \end{pmatrix}.$$

When $\ell = 3$, we have $a_3 = 3$, $b_3 = 3$, $c_3 = 1$ and $d_3 = 3$. So, from the Eq. (10),

$$A^3 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 3 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} + 3 \cdot \begin{pmatrix} 0 & r \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}.$$

If $r \equiv 0 \pmod{3}$, the proof in the lemma works without any change. If $r \equiv 1 \pmod{3}$, then we can replace A by A^{-1} and the rest of the proof works again. If all the lifts

A of τ in \mathcal{G}_2 are such that $r \equiv -1 \pmod{3}$, then the proof does not work. And, this is the only case that we do not have a proof of the vanishing of $H^1(\mathcal{G}_i, E[\ell^i])$.

4.2. An example

Let A and B be the elliptic curves defined by the equations

$$A : y^2 + y = x^3 - x^2 - 10x - 20,$$

$$B : y^2 + y = x^3 - x^2 - 7820x - 263580$$

and fix $\ell = 5$. These curves are denoted by 11A1 and 11A2, respectively, in Cremona's table [1]. They are also studied by V  lu in [13].

The group of rational torsion points $A(\mathbf{Q})_{\text{tors}}$ of the curve A is isomorphic to $\mathbf{Z}/5\mathbf{Z}$, generated by the point $P = (5, 5)$. And, the curve B has no rational torsion. There is an isogeny over \mathbf{Q}

$$f : A \longrightarrow B$$

of degree 5, whose kernel is generated by the point P .

Crucial is the fact that the Galois group $\text{Gal}(\mathbf{Q}(A[\ell])/\mathbf{Q})$ can be expressed in matrix form as

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & * \end{pmatrix} \tag{12}$$

with respect to the basis $\{P, Q\}$ with some *nonrational* ℓ -torsion point Q of A [12, Section 5.5.2]. Take $R = f(Q) \in B[\ell]$ and complete a basis for $B[\ell]$ by adding another point $S \in B[\ell]$. We prove that $\mathcal{G} = \text{Gal}(\mathbf{Q}(B[\ell])/\mathbf{Q})$ is isomorphic to G_{except} with respect to the basis $\{R, S\}$.

The character which fills in the lower right coefficient in (12) is nothing but the mod ℓ cyclotomic character χ_ℓ because of Weil pairing. Also, note that the point R spans a proper \mathcal{G} -submodule of $B[\ell]$. Therefore, \mathcal{G} will be upper-triangular. With respect to the basis $\{R, S\}$, The group \mathcal{G} is represented as

$$\begin{pmatrix} \chi_\ell & \beta \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}.$$

The lower-right 1 is again due to Weil pairing. Further, β is nontrivial, otherwise B would have some rational ℓ -torsion points. So, \mathcal{G} is isomorphic to G_{except} .

5. Application

For this section, our elliptic curve E is assumed to have no complex multiplication, unless stated otherwise.

5.1. Extension of Kolyagin's result on $\text{III}(E/K)$

Let $K = \mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{D})$ be an imaginary quadratic extension with fundamental discriminant $D \neq -3, -4$ where all prime divisors of N split. The point $y_K \in E(K)$ will denote the Heegner point associated with the maximal order in K . When y_K is of infinite order, m is defined to be the largest integer such that $y_K \in \ell^m E(K)$ modulo ℓ -torsion points.

By means of our Main Theorem obtained in Sections 2–4, we will prove Theorem 3 under the weaker assumption “ $\rho_{\mathbf{Q}}$ irreducible”, instead of “ $\rho_{\mathbf{Q}}$ surjective”.

Theorem 21. *Suppose that y_K is of infinite order. Assume that ℓ does not divide D and that E has a good or multiplicative reduction at ℓ . If the Galois representation*

$$\rho_{\mathbf{Q}} : \text{Gal}(\bar{\mathbf{Q}}/\mathbf{Q}) \longrightarrow \text{Aut}(E[\ell])$$

is irreducible over $\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z}$, then

$$\text{ord}_{\ell} |\text{III}(E/K)| \leq 2m.$$

Proof. The prime ℓ is unramified in K/\mathbf{Q} . Therefore, a ramification argument shows that K/\mathbf{Q} is linearly disjoint with $\mathbf{Q}(E[\ell])/\mathbf{Q}$. Hence $\rho_{\mathbf{Q}}$ is irreducible, (resp. surjective) if and only if ρ_K is irreducible (resp. surjective). Note that the irreducibility of $\rho_{\mathbf{Q}}$ implies that $E(K)$ has no ℓ -torsion points. So, Assumption 1 is satisfied with the prime ℓ and K .

In [7], the surjectivity assumption is needed only for the proof of Proposition 2 in loc. cit. Therefore, it suffices to prove Proposition 2 only under the irreducibility assumption.

We will follow the notations in [7]. For any natural number n ,

$$[\ , \]_n : E[\ell^n] \times E[\ell^n] \longrightarrow \mu_{\ell^n}$$

is the Weil pairing on level ℓ^n with values in the group μ_{ℓ^n} of ℓ^n -th roots of unity. The group $E[\ell^n]$ admits the decomposition

$$E[\ell^n] = E[\ell^n]^+ \oplus E[\ell^n]^-$$

with respect to the action of a complex conjugation. We may and will choose the generators e_n^+ and e_n^- of $E[\ell^n]^+$ and $E[\ell^n]^-$, respectively, in a compatible manner for all $n \geq 1$. That is, $\ell \cdot e_n^+ = e_{n-1}^+$ and $\ell \cdot e_n^- = e_{n-1}^-$.

Fix $n' > n$, and let $V = K(E[\ell^{n'}])$. For any $g \in \text{Gal}(V/\mathbf{Q})$, we let $\alpha(g) = 1$ if g restricts to the identity on K , and $\alpha(g) = -1$ otherwise. Note that any g acts on $E[\ell^n]$ via its restriction to $\mathbf{Q}(E[\ell^n])$.

Lemma 22. *Let P and Q be in $E[\ell^n]$. If $[P, ge_n^-]_n = [Q, ge_n^+]_n^{-\alpha(g)}$ for all $g \in \text{Gal}(V/\mathbf{Q})$, then $P = Q = O$.*

Proof. Induction on n . When $n = 1$, we have

$$[P, ge_1^-]_1 = [Q, ge_1^+]_1^{-\alpha(g)} \quad (13)$$

for all $g \in \text{Gal}(V/\mathbf{Q})$. Recall that the extensions K/\mathbf{Q} and $\mathbf{Q}(E[\ell])/\mathbf{Q}$ are linearly disjoint. Therefore, each $\sigma \in \text{Gal}(\mathbf{Q}(E[\ell])/\mathbf{Q})$ can lift to \tilde{g}_1 and \tilde{g}_2 in $\text{Gal}(K(E[\ell])/\mathbf{Q})$ in such a way that \tilde{g}_1 restricts to the identity on K and \tilde{g}_2 restricts to the unique nontrivial element in $\text{Gal}(K/\mathbf{Q})$. Further, \tilde{g}_1 and \tilde{g}_2 can be lifted to g_1 and g_2 in $\text{Gal}(V/\mathbf{Q})$. By construction, $\alpha(g_1) = 1$ and $\alpha(g_2) = -1$. Applying g_1 and g_2 in (13), we get

$$[P, \sigma e_1^-]_1 = [Q, \sigma e_1^+]_1 = 1.$$

By the irreducibility assumption, it follows that $\{\sigma e_1^-\}_{\sigma \in \text{Gal}(\mathbf{Q}(E[\ell])/\mathbf{Q})}$ generates $E[\ell]$, hence $P = O$. Similarly, $Q = O$.

Let $n > 1$. By raising the equation $[P, ge_n^-]_n = [Q, ge_n^+]_n^{-\alpha(g)}$ to its ℓ -th power, we get $[\ell P, g(\ell e_n^-)]_{n-1} = [\ell Q, g(\ell e_n^+)]_{n-1}^{-\alpha(g)}$. Equivalently, we have

$$[\ell P, ge_{n-1}^-]_{n-1} = [\ell Q, ge_{n-1}^+]_{n-1}^{-\alpha(g)}$$

for all $g \in \text{Gal}(V/\mathbf{Q})$. By the induction hypothesis, $\ell P = \ell Q = O$. Therefore P and Q are in $E[\ell] \subseteq E[\ell^n]$. From the compatibility of Weil pairing, we have $[P, ge_n^-]_n = [P, ge_1^-]_1$ and $[Q, ge_n^+]_n = [Q, ge_1^+]_1$. We are reduced to the case $n = 1$, hence the lemma follows. \square

We proceed to prove Proposition 2 in [7], keeping the same notations. The homomorphism $f : H^1(K, E[\ell^n]) \rightarrow H^1(V, \mu_{\ell^n})$ in [7] is defined by, for all $z \in \text{Gal}(\tilde{\mathbf{Q}}/V)$,

$$f(h) : z \mapsto [h^+(z), e_n^-]_n^2 [h^-(z), e_n^+]_n^2,$$

where $h = h^+ + h^- \in H^1(K, E[\ell^n])$ is the decomposition with respect to the complex conjugation. In the proof of Proposition 2 in loc. cit., the surjectivity assumption is needed (and nowhere else) to prove that f is injective.

The Eq. (18) in loc. cit. says that

$$[h^+(z), ge_n^-]_n = [h^-(z), ge_n^+]_n^{-\alpha(g)}$$

for all $g \in \text{Gal}(V/\mathbf{Q})$. From Lemma 22, it follows that $h^+(z) = h^-(z) = 0$ for all $z \in \text{Gal}(\mathbf{Q}/V)$. Therefore h is in the kernel of the restriction map

$$H^1(K, E[\ell^n]) \longrightarrow H^1(V, E[\ell^n]).$$

However, the kernel is equal to the cohomology group $H^1(\mathcal{G}_{n'}, E[\ell^n])$. The following lemma is an easy corollary of our Main Theorem, and it will finish the proof of Theorem 21. \square

Lemma 23. $H^1(\mathcal{G}_{n'}, E[\ell^n]) = 0$ for all $n' > n$.

Proof. The short exact sequence

$$0 \longrightarrow E[\ell^n] \longrightarrow E[\ell^{n'}] \xrightarrow{\times \ell^n} E[\ell^{n'-n}] \longrightarrow 0$$

yields the long exact $\mathcal{G}_{n'}$ -cohomology sequence, part of which is

$$E[\ell^{n'-n}]^{\mathcal{G}_{n'}} \longrightarrow H^1(\mathcal{G}_{n'}, E[\ell^n]) \longrightarrow H^1(\mathcal{G}_{n'}, E[\ell^{n'}]).$$

The irreducibility assumption implies that $E(K)$ has no ℓ -torsion points. Therefore, we have $E[\ell^{n'-n}]^{\mathcal{G}_{n'}} = 0$. And our Main Theorem tells us that $H^1(\mathcal{G}_{n'}, E[\ell^{n'}]) = 0$. \square

Corollary 24. Suppose that y_K , D and ℓ are as in Theorem 21. If $\ell > 37$ then

$$\text{ord}_\ell |\text{III}(E/K)| \leq 2m.$$

Proof. It is known by the work of Mazur [10] that, for an elliptic curve E over \mathbf{Q} with no CM, the Galois representation $\rho_{\mathbf{Q}}$ is always irreducible for all $\ell > 37$. \square

Remark 25. In [7], Kolyvagin not only finds the bound of $\text{ord}_\ell |\text{III}(E/K)|$ but also determines the complete group structure of the ℓ -part of $\text{III}(E/K)$ in terms of the (higher) Heegner points of E . This result also carries over *mutatis mutandis* only if we assume the irreducibility of $\rho_{\mathbf{Q}}$.

5.2. Irreducible vs surjective

For a fixed elliptic curve E over \mathbf{Q} , the set of primes ℓ where the mod ℓ Galois representation $\rho_{\mathbf{Q}}$ is not surjective is usually small, (see [12,8]) and, in many cases, this set is empty [2,3]. However, if we vary E , there is no *universal* bound for ℓ known yet for which $\rho_{E,\ell}$ is surjective for all E . Corollary 24 can therefore be regarded as an improvement of Theorem 3 from a computational point of view.

A natural question is then to look for those E and ℓ 's such that the associated representation

$$\rho_{E,\ell} : \text{Gal}(\bar{\mathbf{Q}}/\mathbf{Q}) \longrightarrow \text{GL}_2(\mathbf{Z}/\ell\mathbf{Z})$$

is irreducible, but not surjective. The rest of the section will be devoted to how one can hope to find such examples.

5.2.1. $\ell = 3$

Following Serre [12, Section 5.3], we study the case $\ell = 3$ closely. Let

$$y^2 + a_1xy + a_3y = x^3 + a_2x^2 + a_4x + a_6$$

be the minimal Weierstrass equation of E over \mathbf{Z} . Define, as usual, the following constants;

$$\begin{aligned} b_2 &= a_1^2 + 4a_2, & b_4 &= a_1a_3 + 2a_4, & b_6 &= a_3^2 + 4a_6, \\ b_8 &= a_1^2a_6 - a_1a_4a_3 + 4a_2a_6 + a_2a_3^2 - a_4^2 = (b_2b_6 - b_4^2)/4 \\ c_4 &= b_2^2 - 24b_4, & c_6 &= 36b_2b_4 - b_2^3 - 216b_6, \\ \Delta &= b_4^3 - 27b_6^2 + b_8(36b_4 - b_2^2) = (c_4^3 - c_6^2)/1728, & j &= c_4^3/\Delta. \end{aligned}$$

Let $x_i (i = 1, 2, 3, 4)$ be the x -coordinates of the nonzero 3-torsion points $\pm P_i (i = 1, 2, 3, 4)$, respectively. They form the zeroes of the polynomial

$$f(x) = 3x^4 + b_2x^3 + 3b_4x^2 + 3b_6x + b_8.$$

Proposition 26. *Suppose that Δ is a cube in \mathbf{Q}^* . If $f(x)$ has at most one rational zero, then $\rho_{E,\ell}$ is irreducible but not surjective.*

Proof. One knows (see [12, Section 5.3]) that the order of $G_3 := \rho_{E,3}(\text{Gal}(\bar{\mathbf{Q}}/\mathbf{Q}))$ is not divisible by 3 if and only if Δ is a cube in \mathbf{Q}^* . When this happens, the group G_3 is contained in a normalizer of a Cartan subgroup C of $\text{GL}_2(\mathbf{Z}/3\mathbf{Z})$. If C is nonsplit, G_3 is necessarily irreducible and not surjective. In the case that C is split, G_3 is equal to C or its normalizer. In the former case, we see that G_3 is isomorphic to one of the two groups

$$\begin{pmatrix} \pm 1 & 0 \\ 0 & \pm 1 \end{pmatrix} \quad \text{or} \quad \begin{pmatrix} \pm 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}.$$

Both of these groups project onto the same image in $\text{GL}_2(\mathbf{Z}/3\mathbf{Z})/\{\pm 1\} \simeq \mathcal{S}_4$. It is a cyclic group of order 2, leaving two elements fixed and switching the other two. This implies that G_3 fixes two roots of $f(x) = 0$. Hence $f(x)$ has two rational zeroes.

When G_3 is equal to a normalizer of C , one can find an element from the normalizer which exchanges the two subspaces which are stable under the action of C . [12, Section 2.2] In particular, this shows that $\rho_{E,3}$ is irreducible. \square

Example 27. The hypothesis in the proposition above can be checked easily. For example, take

$$y^2 + y = x^3 - 7x + 12.$$

This is the curve 245A1 in Cremona's table. The discriminant $\Delta = -42875 = -5^3 7^3$ and the polynomial $f(x)$ is

$$f(x) = 3x^4 + 0x^3 + 3(-14)x^2 + 3 \cdot 49x + (-49) = 3x^4 - 42x^2 + 147x - 49.$$

One easily sees that $f(x)$ is irreducible over \mathbf{Q} , so the above proposition applies.

5.2.2. $\ell = 3$ or 5

If one has a single example of E with an irreducible, nonsurjective representation $\rho_{E,\ell}$ with $\ell = 3$ or 5, we can generate many other examples of such representations using the parametrization given by Rubin and Silverberg [11]. The parametrization gives (isomorphism classes of) elliptic curve E_t , indexed by almost all rational number t , with $E_t[\ell] \simeq E[\ell]$ as $\text{Gal}(\bar{\mathbf{Q}}/\mathbf{Q})$ modules. Note that a CM curve will always provide with such an example.

5.2.3. $\ell > 5$

The strategy in the previous paragraph—to start with one example E and then to construct other curves E' with $E'[\ell] \simeq E[\ell]$ as $\text{Gal}(\bar{\mathbf{Q}}/\mathbf{Q})$ modules—fails when ℓ is larger than 5; indeed it was a question of Mazur (cf. [10, p. 133]) to determine all such E' . See [5] for the case $\ell = 7$. Of course, the larger ℓ is, the harder to find a non surjective $\rho_{E,\ell}$.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to express his gratitude to Dr. V. Kolyvagin, under whose guidance this work has been completed. He is also grateful to Dr. C. Popescu for the invaluable help and encouragement on this work. Finally, he is thankful to the referee for pointing out an argument given in Section 3.4, which simplified the original presentation of the author.

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